

# CSUH STUDENT OPINION SURVEY ABOUT A CAMPUS NAME CHANGE

Corissa Barbary and Valerie Sue  
CSUH Department of Communication  
May 2004

Contact—Valerie Sue: [vsue@csuahyward.edu](mailto:vsue@csuahyward.edu)

## Background

Last year the CSUH Integrated Marketing Communications Committee proposed changing the name of the campus to California State University, East Bay. Some of the reasons for this proposed name change included: to attract more first time freshmen, to be viewed as an option for students in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties and to generate more private donations.

While reports emanating from the university's IMC committee claimed support from CSUH students and faculty for the name change proposal, anecdotal evidence indicated otherwise. This survey project was undertaken to sort out the apparent contradiction and to establish empirical evidence regarding student opinions about the proposed name change of the campus.

## Methods

Participants were selected using a cluster sampling procedure. A selection of classes was randomly chosen from a sampling frame consisting of all the classes being offered on the Hayward campus during Winter Quarter 2004. Once permission to conduct the survey was obtained from the class instructors, the survey was administered to all students present during the selected class time. The questionnaire consisted of items relating to student opinions about the name change as well as questions about how students currently receive and prefer to receive CSUH related information.

## Sample Description

The sample (n=173) consists of: 18% lower classmen, 58% upper classmen and 24% graduate students. Most (60%) entered CSUH as transfer students. The mean age of the sample is 27 with a range of 18 to 58 years old. Female students make up 72% of the sample, and male students constitute 28%. Students live in 41 different cities across the Bay Area; the most common cities were Hayward (24%), Fremont (11%) and Castro Valley (5%). Most students (43%) work between one and 20 hours per week, 31% work between 11 and 20 hours and 26% do not work at all. The overwhelming majority of students (81%) do not participate in any clubs, organizations or sports teams at CSUH.

## Results

### *Opinions about the name change*

The main question in the survey was about student opinions regarding the name change. When asked if they would favor the changing of the name of the campus, 76% of students said they did not favor the proposal. Only 9% said they thought the name should be changed, and 15% weren't sure how they felt about the name change.

Students were also asked their opinions about some specific consequences of a proposed name change. Table 1 details the results of these questions.

**Table 1**  
**Opinions about consequences of a name change**

Changing the name of the campus will...	Agree	Disagree	Total
Improve the image.	17%	83%	100%
Attract more first-time freshman.	17%	83%	100%
Secure more private funding.	20%	80%	100%
Diminish the value of my degree.	38%	62%	100%
Confuse people.	84%	16%	100%
Create too many unnecessary expenses.	82%	18%	100%
Create a greater awareness of the campus.	23%	77%	100%

### **Information sources**

Most students reported checking their Horizon e-mail once a week (38%). Almost as many said they check their e-mail at least daily, if not several times a day (36%). The rest check their Horizon e-mail once a quarter or less (26%).

Students get their news and information about campus events from several sources. The top four sources were: CSUH website (60%), e-mail announcements (48%), peers (35%) and the Pioneer newspaper (29%).

When asked about preferences for information sources, students said they preferred e-mail announcements (23%), CSUH website (22%), peers (7%) and the Pioneer newspaper (7%).

## **Conclusion**

Students in this sample were overwhelmingly against the name change proposal. When asked specifically about the possible benefits and drawbacks that might result from changing the name of the campus, most respondents disagreed with the notions that a name change would lead to an improved campus image, attract more first-time freshmen, increase private funding or create greater awareness of the campus. They also disagreed with the statement that a name change might diminish the value of their degrees. The respondents agreed that a name change may confuse people and create unnecessary expenses.

This study serves as the first step in a research program that will fully investigate the opinions of other publics relevant to the University. Follow-up research will include a telephone survey of members of the Hayward community, focus group discussions with local high school juniors and seniors and their parents and surveys with other CSUH internal publics not covered by this research.